

## SPORTS COME BACK WITH BIG WHOOP

1920 Is Greatest Year in History of Sport—Multitudes Attend Shows.

NEW YORK, July 25.—When the curtain rolled up on the year 1920 was generally predicted that this would be the greatest year in the history of sport the world has ever known.

That prediction is more than holding good. Sports have come back with a bang to enjoy more popularity than they have ever known before. Every sporting event of any consequence that has been held to date, both in this country and in foreign lands, has attracted crowds that have been beyond the wildest guesses of those who have been spectators.

Baseball magnates, especially in the major leagues, are dizzily enjoying prosperity that dwarfs the golden days of baseball's best previous years—the period between 1909 and 1913—by comparison.

Attendance records in no less than five major league cities have been sent crashing into the discard since the season opened. The New York Yankees, for instance, have broken the attendance record at the Polo grounds on two occasions. And the same Yankees took both Chicago and St. Louis by storm on their last Western road trip, not to mention Cleveland, where they were greeted by the greatest turning out of fans to a Sunday game that the Forest City has ever known.

Horse racing is literally wallowing in a flood of attendance, especially at the Metropolitan tracks, where the ponies draw crowds of from 20,000 to 35,000 whenever there is a race of importance on the program. The great Man o' War galloped to several new world records amid the frantic cheers of between 20,000 and 30,000 wild-eyed racing fans.

At Ithaca, where the intercollegiate regatta was rowed on beautiful Lake Cayuga, the Orange variety of Syracuse flashed across the finish line, while the crowd, estimated at 25,000, looked on with varied emotions.

At New London, where Harvard defeated Yale on the Thames, July 30, 000 people lined the course, and earlier in the rowing season, at Philadelphia, when the American Henley and the Childs cup races were rowed on the Schuylkill river, more than 15,000 devotees of rowing were present.

The great athletic meets that have featured the season, borrowing importance because of their bearing on selections for the Olympic team, have attracted bigger crowds than athletic officials could have hoped for.

The greatest single gathering of the year saw the classic English Derby at Epsom Downs. There was no accurate way to estimate the vast crowd, but the British critics who have scanned the numbers at the historic Epsom course for years recorded that the throng closely approached the million mark.

Horse races such as the great Kentucky Derby and the Latonia Derby drew unprecedented crowds. Fifty-eight thousand people saw Paul Jones win the Kentucky event.

In France, where Coq Gaulois won the Grand National Steeplechase, on June 20, 70,000 people gathered at the track.

In England, where the American Davis cup players forged their way to many victories, the tennis courts at Queens, London; at Wimbledon and at Eastbourne, were flanked by thousands of humanity, and thousands failed to secure accommodations.

Yet the year is young. There are many great sporting events on the calendar to be decided. The classic Olympic track and field games at Antwerp will be witnessed by thousands upon thousands of people. The national golf and tennis championships in this country; the coming world series and the classic football games of next fall, which promise to draw the greatest attendance in history, will add hundreds of thousands to the attendance figures in sport for this most wonderful of years.

### A TEN-YEAR ARGUMENT.

Grover Cleveland Alexander's 13-inning defeat of the Giants last week in Chicago turned the balance in Alec's favor for the first time in a decade of tilting between the New York Yankees' speed king and McGraw's team.

When Alec was in his prime as a member of the Philadelphia team he lost more games to the Giants than he won from them. They still had the Indian on his back when he joined the Cubs. Last season Alec never attained his best form, but he has come back with bells on this year and leaving the Giants more trouble than he ever caused them before.

Up to last Friday the Giants had won 21 games from Alec and lost the same number to him over a stretch of nearly 10 years. The "rubber" went 13 innings before Alec poked his nose in front.

### MAACK BUYS WALKER.

Connie Mack recently bought outfielder Frank Walker from the Rocky Mount club of the Virginia league and is said to have paid \$7,500 for him. Walker formerly was with Detroit and was shipped to Portland. He refused to report to the Coast league club this year because he did not want to leave his home in Rocky Mount, so Portland let Rocky Mount have him. The Athletics also have bought Pitcher Paul Johnson from the Waterbury Eastern league club.

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## JOHNSON'S NO-HIT HURLING FEAT ADDS TO GREAT PITCHING CAREER



WALTER JOHNSON.

We can still call him king, this great big Swede who has been Clark Griffith's pitching staff for campaigns without number. For the other day when Walter Johnson hurled a no-hit game he showed that the whip was still there.

A high dive into the records brings out the fact that this is the sixth addition Johnson has made to the notable pitching feats of the game's history.

Probably his greatest feat was in 1910, when he thundered down through the season by striking out 313 men.

Two years before that Johnson pulled the unique feat of pitching three consecutive games against the Yankees.

Johnson added to his scoreless inning record when he pitched 55 consecutive scoreless rounds between April 10 and May 15, 1912. The king's record of 16 straight victories in 1912 has been equaled only by Joe Wood. That same season, in winning nine games from one club, the White Sox, Johnson equaled the major league mark that had been set by Ed Reulbach, of the Cubs, in 1908.

Johnson is getting along in years as pitchers go. It may be that he has hung up his last record, but his record to date is one to be mighty proud of.

## SID MERCER'S CLOSE-UPS

### "ASSEMBLED" TEAMS.

They say that John J. McGraw has decided to return to the old, sound system of developing his Giants from the abundant raw material instead of buying them on the hoof from other clubs.

McGraw is combing the tall grass for young players as he has not been raked in years by his scouts. He will inspect a large consignment of green talent next spring, and will carry as much of this material as the league regulations will permit.

Back in the golden days of the Giants many budding athletes were carefully nurtured by McGraw for months before being sent to the major leagues. Burns sat on the bench for a year before his opportunity came. Dave Robertson, Arthur Fletcher, Charley Herzog, Rosa Young, Jeff Tesreau and Earl Smith were a few McGraw-made players who were developed either on the bench or by some minor league manager closely associated with McGraw.

The Giants of those days were colorful. They reflected the spirit of a great leader and, in our opinion, the most progressive baseball directors the game ever knew.

### ONE MORE.

McGraw is not given to discussing his baseball ambitions, but he cherishes a desire to win one more world's championship before he steps out as a field

leader. He failed dismally in 1911 and 1912, and he was outlucked in 1913 and 1917. But we believe that if he can rebuild his team with fresh young material within the next two years, he will step out on the coaching lines again and be the McGraw of old.

### A REPRIEVE.

The new baseball rules have now received a thorough trial, and it is safe to predict that a few of them will be tossed in the ash can next winter. The American league has already returned to the old system of judging hits over outfield barriers fair or foul, according to where the ball is last seen by the umpire.

The intentional pass regulations are not being enforced and a strong reaction has set in against the proposed elimination of "spitball" pitchers from the major leagues.

The "spitball," like old John Barleycorn, will die a natural death if allowed a reasonable time to expire. The minor leagues are not developing this type of pitchers any more because the "spitball" is forbidden in most of these organizations, and young pitchers know they have no future in the major leagues if they stick to freak deliveries.

There is a growing sentiment among big league club owners, however, against casting out all "spitball" pitchers next season. Every American league club has at least one of these pitchers, and the National league harbors several. The elimination of all these pitchers in one season is therefore considered an unnecessary sacrifice of property rights.

Strict enforcement of the rules against "shine ball" pitching and the "doctoring" of baseballs has hampered pitchers to such an extent that batters are the feature performers this season.

Even the arrival of hot weather has not appreciably decreased the hitting or improved the pitching. It is actually a relief to see a "spitballer" bob up now, and then to curb the wielders of mighty maces.

A majority of the "certified spitballers" now totting in the major leagues, are veterans who developed the delivery to hang on in fast company. At the most they have only a few seasons to go. It seems unfair to suddenly deprive them of their means of livelihood.

For these reasons a majority of the club owners should vote to retain them as long as they can hold the pace.

It will be no easy matter for the American league to replace in one season such clever pitchers as Cowles, Quinn, Shocker, Dugas, Sothoron and Russell, or for the National league to recover from the loss of Enak, Goodwin, Douglas, Hendrix, Fillingim, Mitchell, Grimes and Fisher.

Club owners, who have discussed this prospect informally, agree that these men should be permitted to yield gracefully to time, and it is almost certain that they will be the objects of special legislation next winter.

### TEXAS PLAYERS GOING.

Texas league critics are speculating on whether the club magnates of the league will make any sales to the major leagues except those that will be required by optional arrangements, such as Houston and San Antonio have.

There are a number of players deserving promotion. It is argued, and they should get the chance through sale, since there is no draft in sight for them. Houston, of course, is under obligations to the St. Louis Cardinals, while John McGraw has an option on the San Antonio team in return for favors extended.

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